

# Mural Maker



Sometimes, historic documents used for genealogical research don't tell the whole story. For example, when researching my wife's grand-uncle, Angelo Magnanti, one would get the impression that he was either an architect or interior designer for that is how he described himself on the federal census reports from 1920 through 1940. It turns out that he was far more. Hearing of some family stories, I looked a little deeper and found that he was a renowned artist specializing in large scale projects.

Born and trained in Italy, he immigrated to New York, where he decorated numerous banks and churches and two walls within Penn Station (that building was torn down in 1966). Magnanti designed the mosaic ceiling of the banking room of the Williamsburg Savings Bank and four painted murals (illustrated above) that depicted scenes from the Bronx's early European settlement for the Dollar Savings Bank in the Bronx.

In 1935, Magnanti executed the decorative finishes for architect John Russell Pope's renovation and addition to the building housing The Frick Collection. Drawings for the renovation were among those exhibited at the Frick in 2010 to celebrate the museum's 75th anniversary. Indeed, The Frick Art Reference Library is decorated with an earlier Magnanti mural and houses an archive on the artist.

Outside New York, Magnanti's projects included decorations for the conference room of the United States Supreme Court

building in Washington, D.C. and the Mormon Tabernacle in Salt Lake City.

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